Figure 144: Children particpating in a communitiy activity. Photo courtesy of Julie Fay.

Throughout this Plan, there is acknowledgement for the many planning processes, policy directions, design studies, and recommendations for Over-the-Rhine over the past thirty years. Some of these past recommendations have been implemented; many have not. This section is designed to lay out the steps that will take this plan beyond just words on paper, to help it become to reality on the street. The key implementation strategies that follow set the general course of action. The implementation matrices on pages 147-165 provide yet another level of detail by identifying specific projects, programs, and actions to be completed, including vital partners and their roles in the process.

The implementation matrices show that this plan includes a very comprehensive set of recommendations. In order for this community to be successful, however, many stakeholders will need to come together and work toward common project goals. The collaboration that is envisioned in this implementation strategy will be critical, and in many ways, the most difficult task to accomplish as this community moves forward.

Create an umbrella Community Development Corporation to initiate and oversee plan implementation

Mission
A new Community Development Corporation (CDC) should be privately formed to act as developer, broker, and facilitator, and provide technical expertise in areas of housing and economic development project development. The mission of the organization should be to advance the objectives of this plan through the development and production of real estate development and through partnership arrangements with the many other development organizations in the community.

A secondary focus of the CDC could be to facilitate the identification and coordination of the many housing, economic development, educational, and transportation recommendations of this plan. These services are important to the overall success of the neighborhood and are important recommendations. As the plan indicates, however, there are currently many existing organizations and institutions working to provide these services and programs. It will not be the job of the CDC to provide services, but to help coordinate when appropriate.

Membership
The CDC should be established with a Board and a staff. The Board should include people from the OTR resident and development community, and from the various cultural, business and financial institutions and foundations represented in the neighborhood. The Board should provide the community with the access to the resources and technical expertise that will make it successful.

The CDC needs to start with professional staff that can implement the day-to-day operations based on the Board's direction. The staff needs to have background in development and development finance and have proven experience with successful project management.

Partners
The CDC will work in conjunction with the many for-profit and non-profit developers that are already operating in the community. Partners like the OTR Housing Network, Franciscan Homes Development, Urban Sites, ReStoc, and the OTR Foundation will certainly continue to undertake projects in the neighborhood. The CDC will help facilitate, undertake additional projects, and, along with the City, engage in site assembly and help create partnerships to develop mixed-income projects. The CDC will also be active in seeking funding from many sources for project development.

Establish a Tax Incentive Finance (TIF) district(s) as a long-term targeted funding mechanism
In order to create a dedicated funding mechanism to implement the plan, the establishment of two TIF districts is recommended. OTR is approximately 600 acres in size, and in Ohio TIF districts are limited to 300 acres, hence two districts.

New State of Ohio legislation allows for the creation this new district. A TIF district allows the City to capture all of the taxes above the base level of the district at the time it was established. In other words, as the value of real estate in the area goes up based on new investments, new tax mils and inflation, those increased taxes are captured into a fund that is available only for eligible uses in the district. Over time, this funding source can generate significant resources for a district.

In the case of OTR, the district is devalued and as the plan is implemented, new investments and generally rising real estate values will generate capital that can be used to continue to fund project development in the area.

This is a unique opportunity to establish a funding source dedicated only to the neighborhood. In most other funding sources, both public and private funding requests from OTR are competing with other valid projects, and there is never enough to go around. A TIF fund, by its nature, would be dedicated just for use in the district. The amount of funds available is based solely on the revenue generated in the district. Here too, there will be competition, but the ability to create an ongoing, dedicated funding source available for 30 years is unique among the financing tools the City has to offer.

Package Financing Tools
There are a number of financing and project development tools and incentives available for projects and programs in the neighborhood. The City of Cincinnati, Cincinnati Development Fund, Hamilton County, the State of Ohio, and other private grant-making and financial institutions are all potential partners. All have existing programs that may provide assistance. They have all also indicated a willingness to entertain new requests for proposals to assist in the redevelopment of OTR.

The ability to package assistance on site acquisition, lead abatement , and gap financing will make project development easier. It is incumbent on the various players to work together to create coordinated resources. The Urban Living Loan Pool that is offered by Cincinnati Development Fund (CDF) is an example of where the private sector has funded a loan pool. CDF is also financing projects that will have city support.

Support Early Start Projects
There are a number of housing, economic development, education, and park projects identified in the plan. These projects are not intended to be the only projects that should move forward in the plan. They are, however, projects that are in the first phases of development and are consistent with the plan goals and objectives. Each of these projects is moving through pre-development and development, and the plan is supportive of providing priority resources to them as they move through the systems of funding at the local, state and federal level.

Support the School Planning and Construction Activities
A key component of the plan is the significant revitalization of the public schools in the neighborhood. A committee has been formed out of the neighborhood schools Local School Decision-Making Committees (LSDMC's), parents, students, teachers, and other staff, including some participants in this planning process. This joint committee will be working to further refine recommendations for CPS's Facilities Master Plan and to discuss the details of the partnerships and curriculum of the schools. These efforts are supported and their outcomes will be considered part of this plan.

Resident Training and Empowerment Activities
The residents of Over the Rhine are critical stakeholders in the implementation process. They need to have a meaningful place at the table throughout project implementation. Capacity development will be necessary to help facilitate resident participation. It is recommended that the resident training that began before this process be continued for those who wish to participate. Funding for this training can be gained through a variety of grants. The CDC recommended for plan implementation should make this their first item of business.

Develop a Property Acquisition Program

A critical first step in project development for any residential, economic development, or community development project is site control. This has often been an issue in the neighborhood. One of the important roles the city and the CDC can play is to assemble real estate in areas where opportunities present themselves, and where it is important to make an impact, or to remove a particular blight.

The city is developing a property acquisition program that will provide valuable assistance to all types of projects. One of the important uses of TIF proceeds in the initial phases of project development will be to assemble sites that can be turned to the market for appropriate projects. It may also be possible for the City to take responsibility for demolitions where necessary and for environmental remediation (lead abatement) in some cases. These activities at the front end of a project will significantly reduce the cost of projects to the private developer.

Engage existing service providers with a role in implementation

The implementation tables on pages 147-165 identify many partners who will have a role in implementing this plan. The community will need to work together to identify those partners, make contact with them, and coordinate efforts. In many cases, those identified in the tables have either been part of the planning process or have indicated a willingness to participate. In other cases, there are programs and agencies that could offer a significant contribution but have not been involved. The CDC can play a role here as well, as can the Community Council, the OTR Chamber of Commerce, the Residents Table and others.

Community Marketing

Much of this implementation section has been dedicated to getting projects produced in ways that support the plan recommendations. An important part of success is selling the neighborhood to the wider community and improving the overall image of the neighborhood. The audience for this is both external and internal. Current residents need to feel good about their neighborhood and in order to be successful new residents, businesses, and visitors will need to be comfortable with OTR. As with all of these recommendations, there are a number of people and organizations that have a role to play here.

Create a Housing Trust Fund

A Housing Trust Fund commits public sources of revenue to a dedicated, ongoing fund for housing. This fund could provide a dependable source of funding for the creation and maintenance of housing, homebuyer assistance, below-market rental housing, gap financing, start up funding for housing developers, and land acquisition and design costs.

There are 170 Housing Trust Funds in operation in the United States today. Each is developed with a similar structure, but is tailored to incorporate the individual housing needs and financial resources of its jurisdiction. Revenue sources for the fund often come from new sources of income so that money is not taken away from existent programs. Sources of public dollars can include real estate taxes or fees, developer fees, TIF funds, repayments on various loan programs, interest from government-held and market-based accounts, and other taxes and fees, such as sales taxes, hotel taxes, and permit or demolition fees. While most Housing Trust Funds are not comprised of private funding sources, some national funds have considered combining public and private funds for certain activities such as land acquisition and predevelopment work. PolicyLink is an excellent resource for additional information about how to establish and manage a Housing Trust Fund.

Housing Goal 1: Encourage and welcome new investment at all levels of the housing market and ensure the long-term sustainability of enough affordable housing to house current residents.		
Objectives:	**Strategies:**	**Participating Agencies/Groups:**
Protect current residents.	Continue to provide subsidies to affordable housing agencies.	City of Cincinnati LISC/Private/Foundation/United Way/Cincinnati Development Fund
	Work with residents to facilitate asset development such as renter equity and co-operative programs.	Community Land Trust, Umbrella CDC
	Identify housing opportunities for residents displaced by Section 8 opt-outs or to accommodate housing rehabilitation.	Proposed One-Stop Housing Center
Encourage new residents	Market the strengths of OTR	OTR Chamber of Commerce, OTR Community Council
	Market the OTR community as a diverse, mixed income, family neighborhood.	OTR Chamber of Commerce, OTR Community Council
	Encourage banking community to make low-interest loans for homeownership in OTR.	Cincinnati Banking & Financial Community, City of Cincinnati, CDF, Umbrella CDC
	Support the conversion of vacant multi-family buildings into condominiums	Umbrella CDC, City of Cincinnati, profit and non-profit developers
Preserve and strengthen all residential subareas through equitable distribution of resources.	Create an OTR Loan Fund	CDF
	Investigate the feasibility of establishing a Housing Trust Fund.	Umbrella CDC, Non-profit developers
	Establish covenants that require proposed rent-restricted units to remain fixed for a 15-year period for the use of CDBG funds and HOME funds.	City of Cincinnati
	Host bi-annual seminars for residents to provide tips on purchasing and developing property for residential use.	Proposed One-Stop Housing Center/Better Housing League/City of Cincinnati
	Continue to seek to identify grants, loans and other financial and programmatic resources available to residents and developers in OTR.	Proposed One-Stop Housing Center/ Cincinnati Development Fund - Capitalize Loan Fund, Umbrella CDC
	Establish and maintain an inventory of per unit rental and mortgage cost.	Xavier University

Increase financial resources and support for market-rate and low-income housing providers.	Provide financial incentives for housing development and rehabilitation gap financing for low- to moderate-income individuals and non-profits, and market rate developers.	City of Cincinnati/Cincinnati Development Fund, State of Ohio
	Support Receivership for abandoned and tax delinquent lots and buildings to non-profits agencies engaged in providing housing for low- and moderate-income housing as well as other special needs.	OTR Stakeholders, City of Cincinnati
	Market the City-Wide Community Reinvestment Area tax abatement opportunity for homeownership.	City of Cincinnati/ Community Council/ Proposed One-Stop Housing Center
	Designate OTR as a Tax Increment Financing District.	City of Cincinnati
	Establish a Land Trust.	Umbrella CDC
	Expand OHFA's use of their Link Deposit Program.	State of Ohio, Hamilton County, City of Cincinnati
Stimulate the use of abandoned, underutilized and substandard buildings in OTR.	Work with the City's department of Buildings and Inspections to examine the building codes to determine if modification could be made that will continue to ensure safety but allow redevelopment of older and historic buildings.	OTR Stakeholders
	Remove buildings out of speculation by acquiring vacant land and buildings.	Umbrella CDC, City of Cincinnati, project developers
	Strengthen residents' ability to report code violations through educational programs on how to recognize zoning and housing code violations by hosting bi-annual seminars.	Proposed One-Stop Housing
	Establish a maintenance service hiring local residents to help senior citizens and handicapped in housing repair and maintenance, including exterior painting and general cleaning.	Community Council
	Develop a financing program in collaboration with the Department of Building and Inspections to aid owners in meeting code requirements. This can be submitted through the City Community Priority Request process.	City of Cincinnati, Buildings & Inspections, Community Development, OTR Stakeholder
	Continue the receivership program for vacant buildings in OTR.	Abandoned Buildings Company (ABC), Better Housing League

	Request owners of vacant land and buildings to list and sell their property to individuals or organizations willing to develop/rehabilitate the property.	OTR Stakeholders
	Require and stringently monitor mothballing of vacant buildings.	City of Cincinnati
	Work with property owners and potential developers to rehabilitate the following residential target areas: • Findlay Market Neighborhood • Vine Street Facades Program • Infrastructure in Pendleton Neighborhood • Washington Park District • Mulberry/Rothenberg Neighborhood • Vine Street Housing • Melindy Square	City of Cincinnati, Umbrella CDC, CDF, various profit and non-profit developers
Increase new homeownership opportunities.	Develop Limited Equity Housing Cooperatives and other alternative homeownership programs such as rent-to-own, rent equity through affordable housing tax credits, and co-operative programs.	Homeownership Center of Cincinnati
	Encourage realtors to actively market vacancies in OTR.	Cincinnati Area Board of Realtors, OTR Chamber
	Assist neighborhood-housing services such as Habitat for Humanity and other non-profit agencies in marketing their program(s) in OTR.	Coalition on Homelessness and Housing in Ohio
	Encourage owner occupied rental property such as mixed use.	Cincinnati Banking & Financial Community
	Target abandoned residential buildings for housing auction or homesteading to provide homes and promote homeownership.	City of Cincinnati, Community Development, Hamilton County

Housing Goal 2: Provide appropriate housing related services for all residents.		
Objectives:	**Strategies:**	**Participating Agencies/Groups:**
Identify & market housing services available to residents of OTR.	Create, update and make available to all residents a database of available rental housing in OTR.	- Over-the-Rhine Housing Network - OTR Foundation - Urban Sites - OTR Chamber - RESTOC - Mercy Franciscan Home Development, Inc. - Preserving Affordable Housing (PAH) - Community Builders - Housing and Urban Development (HUD) - City of Cincinnati, Neighborhood Services - Cincinnati Area Board of Realtors - Coalition on Homelessness and Housing in Ohio
Provide information on housing related services.	Provide residents management training to OTR residents.	OTR Community Council
	Hold biannual seminars on renters' rights	OTR Community Council, City of Cincinnati, Umbrella CDC
	Establish a one-stop comprehensive housing related referral service	OTR Community Council, Umbrella CDC
	Provide training/education to new homeowners for maintenance, home repair and disability insurance	Homeownership Center of Cincinnati, Better Housing League
	Create an educational outreach program to provide information to OTR residents on condominium and cooperative ownership opportunities.	Homeownership Center of Cincinnati
Use the assets of residents in OTR to enhance economic vitality.	Work with the City's Employment and training division to match residents' skills with employment and entrepreneur opportunities.	City of Cincinnati Employment and Training, State of Ohio
	Support development that provides job opportunities for OTR residents.	City of Cincinnati, Umbrella CDC, Area businesses, OTR chamber of Commerce

Housing Goal 3: Protect, preserve and enhance the significant landmarks and areas of Over-the-Rhine's historical, architectural and cultural heritage without displacement.		
Objective:	**Strategies:**	**Participating Agencies/Groups:**
Encourage sensitive adaptation of historic properties to modern uses.	Create a local historic district in Over-the-Rhine north of Liberty Street and establish appropriate conservation guidelines for this area.	Historic Conservation Office Cincinnati Preservation Association (CPA)
	Create a local historic district in the Mohawk area of Over-the-Rhine.	Historic Conservation Office Cincinnati Preservation Association (CPA)
Encourage the continued identification and recognition of significant historic, archaeological and cultural resources in Over-the-Rhine.	Prepare walking tours and other promotional materials to educate residents, visitors and potential businesses about Over-the-Rhine's architectural and historical heritage.	Greater Cincinnati Convention and Visitors Bureau, Cincinnati Preservation Association (CPA)
	Enlist the support of the City of Cincinnati Historic Conservation Office and local preservation organizations to educate residents and potential developers on the benefits of living, working and owning a business in a historic area such as Over-the-Rhine.	Historic Conservation Office Cincinnati Preservation Association (CPA), OTR Chamber of Commerce
	Educate property owners about available economic incentives such as Historic Preservation Tax Credits.	Department of Community Development, Historic Conservation Office
Assure that new construction, additions, alterations and demolitions are carried out in a manner that is not detrimental to the neighborhood and to residents.	Investigate establishing a Main Street program on commercial/residential streets such as Vine and Main.	Historic Conservation Office, Department of Community Development OTR Chamber
	Consider supporting the passage of a state tax credit for the rehabilitation of locally designated historic structures (residential, commercial and mixed use).	National Trust for Historic Preservation, Ohio Historic Preservation Office (OHPO), Cincinnati Historical Society (Cincinnati Museum Center)
Encourage the maintenance, rehabilitation and conservation of the existing housing stock to stabilize and strengthen the Over-the-Rhine community.	Undertake a comprehensive accounting of programs and services offered by private and public agencies/organizations that provide funding for abatement of lead and other hazardous materials.	OTR Housing Network, Building Doctor Program, City of Cincinnati, smarts Streets Program
	Investigate the possibility of employing neighborhood youth in cooperation with a local sponsor to provide low-cost maintenance services for neighborhood residents.	Community Council, Impact OTR, Area Businesses
	Investigate creating a program to train neighborhood residents in building trades and/or abatement of hazardous materials.	Historic Building Trades Entrepreneurial Group

Economic Development Goal 1: Make Over–the-Rhine a model for diverse and inclusive business development.		
Objectives:	**Strategies:**	**Participating Agencies/Groups:**
Strengthen neighborhood retail uses on Vine Street and throughout the neighborhood	Site assembly, creation of various project improvements, streetscape improvements, creation of pocket parking lots and a facade program.	Vine Street Coordinator, OTR Chamber of Commerce, Umbrella CDC, City of Cincinnati
Provide support to a variety of office users including tech companies, architectural, arts and other design firms	Market available and newly created spaces to these users	Developers, OTR Chamber of Commerce, Vine Street Coordinator, City of Cincinnati Community Development
Maximize the support and development of digital and technology related business in the community	Provide appropriate infrastructure Enhance business development and job training	City of Cincinnati, Cinergy, OTR Chamber Cincinnati Business Incubator
Coordinate and enhance small business and microenterprise support programs	Focus business start-up on Historic Building Trades, Food Products, and Arts and Crafts	Cincinnati Business Incubator, State Department of Development, Trade Unions, Cincinnati State
Focus marketing of retail space around Findlay Market for local, specialty and international food products and services	Market spaces to restaurant and food specialty establishments	OTR Chamber, Friends of Findlay Market, Findlay Market Merchants, City Of Cincinnati, property owners

Economic Development Goal 2: Establish stronger linkages between the Over-the-Rhine workforce and job training programs and employment opportunities in the neighborhood and throughout the City.		
Objectives:	Strategies:	Participating Agencies/Groups:
Create entrepreneurial opportunities in industries where OTR has a competitive advantage such as historic building trades, the arts and crafts industry, and food services and products at Findlay Market	"Smart Streets" Program	University of Cincinnati, City of Cincinnati
	Redevelop industrial buildings north of Findlay Street and south of and along McMicken for flexible loft space that can accommodate a variety of uses	Property owners, City of Cincinnati, OTR Chamber, Umbrella CDC
	Develop entrepreneurial businesses in the mixed use zone north of Findlay' Street	See above
	Take advantage of residents' skills	Cincinnati business Incubator, Cincinnati Public Schools, Employment and Training
	Provide vendor space	Property Owners, Friends of Findlay Market, Arts Organizations
	Support the kitchen incubator	City of Cincinnati, Area Restaurants, OTR Chamber, Friends of Findlay Market
	Develop job training programs	Employment and training, Cincinnati State, Cincinnati Business Incubator, State of Ohio
	"Cincinnati Cooks" trains residents in food service areas, supports job creation and gives existing culinary businesses a place to start.	Area restaurants, Friends of Findlay Market, OTR Chamber
Establish an educational link between technology-based businesses, neighborhood schools and the Employment and Training Center	Encourage mentoring and skills training	Taft High School, Cincinnati Bell, Entrepreneurial High School, Employment and Training, Cincinnati State
Improve transportation options to employment centers throughout the region, including support for Metro Moves	Good transportation network system to have access to available jobs	Metro, Area Employers